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C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 000525

SIPDIS

NEA/MAG (HAYES); DRL (JOHNSTONE/KLARMAN)
LONDON AND PARIS FOR NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/27/2019
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [TS](#)
SUBJECT: CANADA DELIVERS AIDE-MEMOIRE ON 2009 TUNISIAN
ELECTIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a conversation with the DCM July 24, Canadian Ambassador Bruno Picard said that the Government of Canada (GOC) presented Tunisian Ambassador to Canada Mouldi Sakri July 23 with an Aide-Memoire detailing GOC concerns about "acts of violence, intimidation, harassment of people identified as members of opposition parties, NGO's, and those who express ideas critical to the government." The GOC highlighted the importance of freedom of expression and association and urged the GOT to guarantee these freedoms in the crucial run-up to prospective presidential elections in October 2009. Picard also said that he had asked Ottawa to present the Aide-Memoire there in order to minimize potential GOT actions against the Canadian Embassy in Tunisia. The text of the Aide-Memoire has been scanned and sent to NEA/MAG and DRL.

¶2. (C) The Aide-Memoire states the GOC's concern regarding the increasing number of reports of harassment of political party members and civil society organizations and presses the GOT to take measures to ensure the complete liberty of expression and association necessary in the run-up to the Presidential elections. It argues that:

-- Promoting democratic governance is a high GOC foreign policy priority and that democracy plays a key role in promoting regime stability, prosperity, the protection of human rights and poverty reduction.

-- The GOC and GOT have signatory obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

-- Inclusion of democratic principles in the GOT constitution further supports the need and obligation to respect human rights.

-- Increasing reports of acts of violence, intimidation, harassment of identified GOT critics, NGOs in the run-up to elections deter from an open and free pre-election climate, an essential element for transparent and fair elections in October 2009.

-- The strong bilateral relationship the GOC and the GOT have shared over the past fifty years is based on a common interest in development and progress to ensure a better quality of life for their citizens.

¶3. (C) Comment: It appears that the Aide-Memoire was derived from points the Ambassador shared with a small group of Ambassadors (UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Canada), after their agreement in principle to follow common themes in pressing the GOT for 2009 elections-related deliverables. Sending a message direct from capitals makes it more

difficult for the GOT to brush it aside. Washington may want to consider delivering a similar message to the Tunisian Embassy.

Please visit Embassy Tunis' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/tunis/index.cfm>
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